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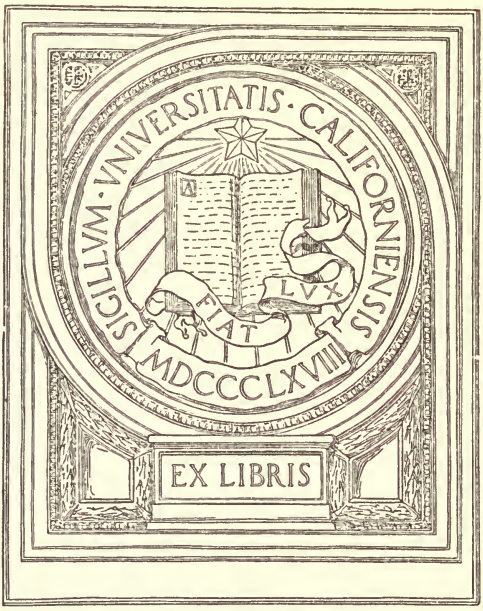
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June 1854

THE CENTRAL PRINCIPLE

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE NEW-ENGLAND SOCIETY OF NEW-YORK,

DECEMBER 22, 1853.

BY

MARK HOPKINS, D.D.

PRESIDENT OF WILLIAMS COLLEGE.

NEW-YORK:
E. FRENCH, 12 BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE.
1854.

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CALIFORNIA

JOHN A. GRAY, *Printer and Stereotyper*,
95 and 97 Cliff street, N. Y.

New-York, Jan. 7, 1854.

Dear Sir: We have the pleasure to communicate herewith some resolutions of the New-England Society. The request contained therein we beg you will early comply with, that we may be able to gratify the desire of our members to possess themselves of copies of your address.

We are, dear sir, very truly yours, &c.,

Chas. A. Peabody,
Wm. Curtis Noyes,
L. B. Wyman,
Henry A. Hurlbut,
Paul Babcock,
} Committee.

Rev. Mark Hopkins, D.D.,
Pres. Williams College, &c., &c.,
Williamstown, Mass.

At a meeting of the Board of Officers of the "New-England Society, in the City of New-York," held at the Astor House on the fifth day of January, the following resolutions were adopted:

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the New-England Society, in the city of New-York, be presented to the Rev. Dr. Hopkins for the very able and instructive address delivered on the 22d December last, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

"*Resolved*, That the Committee of Arrangements be requested to communicate to Dr. Hopkins a copy of the foregoing resolutions, and that they be authorized to publish such number of the address as they may deem expedient."

M. H. Grinnell, President.

Ephraim Kingsbury, Secretary.

Williams College, Jan. 13, 1854.

My Dear Sir: In accordance with the resolutions of the Board of Officers of the New-England Society forwarded by you, and with my acknowledgements for the kind manner in which it is spoken of, the address delivered by me on the 22d ult. is hereby placed at their disposal.

Most respectfully and truly yours,
Mark Hopkins.

C. A. Peabody, Esq.

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ORATION.

The celebrations and amusements of a people indicate their character. A *populace*, such as despotism and superstition produce and imply, require to be amused by pageants, and processions, and sports, and masquerades. Giving up the care of their government to the king, and of their salvation to the priest, what have they to do but to convert their holy-days into holidays, and when a prescribed formality has satisfied the conscience, to follow a monkey, or a tumbler, to visit the cock-pit or the gaming-table, to be gay, and, shall I say, happy?—no, not happy—but to be amused and managed like grown-up children. To such, the idea of a Sabbath as a day of holy rest, is inconceivable.

A *people*, on the other hand, reflective, self-governed, feeling their individual and immediate responsibility to God, will create an atmosphere stifling to all pageantry and mummery. They will keep their Sabbaths; their festivities will be irradiated by a rational joy, and their celebrations and holidays will not be without something to strengthen principle, and nourish the affections. These days will be consecrated to the progress of the peaceful arts; they will commemorate the bounties of

Providence, the struggles and triumphs of freedom, the piety and heroism of Pilgrim Fathers.

Pilgrim Fathers! What wealth of hallowed associations is garnered in these words! By what others in the English language should we prefer to designate our ancestors?

They were Pilgrims—and such Pilgrims. They sought no shrine already hallowed. Not by superstition, or fanaticism, or the love of adventure, or desire for gain, singly or combined, were they moved; but, like Abraham, they went out in the grandeur of simple faith, not knowing whither they went. They went, as they themselves say, "with the great hope and inward seal they had of laying some good foundation for the propagating and advancing the kingdom of Christ in these remote parts of the world."*

That the object assigned by them was their great object, God has been careful to make evident, not from testimony alone, but precisely as he did in the case of the Apostles and first Christians. So close indeed is the parallel, in circumstances, in character, and in results, that the same language will apply to both.

It was only through long inward struggles, and searchings of the Scriptures, and much prayer, that both were brought to separate themselves from a Church in which they were born, but which had substituted the traditions of man for the word of God, and the forms of religion instead of its spirit. And in making this separation, the temper and sincerity of both were tried

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* Young's Chronicles.

to the utmost. Both were forbidden to preach or to teach under heavy penalties, were imprisoned, deprived of their property, put to death, driven from their country and scattered abroad by persecution. Both were placed socially under ban, and utterly scorned by all that passed for refinement in their day—were regarded as "the filth of the earth, and the off-scouring of all things." Against both, Providence itself and the very elements sometimes seemed to conspire, as when Paul was imprisoned for years, and was shipwrecked, and was a night and a day in the deep; and when the Pilgrims attempted to leave England, and the enemy came upon them and divided their families, and the storm arose.

But in these trials they were alike patient and confident in God. Paul could say, "I *know* whom I have believed." John Penry could say just before his martyrdom, "I testify unto you for mine own part, as I shall answer it before Jesus Christ, and his elect angels, that I never saw any truth more clear and more undoubted than this witness wherein we stand." Paul could say, "I am ready to be offered." Penry could say, "And I thank my God, I am not only ready to be bound and banished, but even to die for this cause, by his strength." Paul could say, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better"—but added—"Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Penry could say, "I greatly long, in regard of myself, to be dissolved and to live in the blessed kingdom of heaven with Jesus Christ and his angels." And he too could add,

"I would indeed, if it be his good pleasure, live yet with you to help you bear that grievous and hard yoke which ye are like to sustain, either here or in a strange land." And if the Apostle had had a wife and children, he could hardly have committed them with stronger faith to exile and the promises. "And here," says Penry, "I humbly beseech you, not in any outward regard, as I shall answer it before my God, that you would take my poor and desolate widow, and mess of fatherless and friendless orphans, with you into exile whithersoever you may go, and you shall find, I doubt not, that the blessed promises of my God made to me and mine will accompany you. * * * Only I beseech you, let them not continue after you in this land, where they must be forced to go again into Egypt."

Such was their spirit. Persons of all conditions and of all ages were thus sustained through years of destitution and suffering. Some dying in prison, as Neale says, "like rotten sheep," and some enduring the perils and hardships of the wilderness; but all cheerful and confident in God.

Nor were these persons, as a body, more than the early Christians, narrow, or bigoted, or sour, or fanatical, or turbulent, or seekers of novelties. Says Robinson: "As they that affect alienation from others make their differences as great, and the adverse opinion or practice as odious as they can, thereby to further their desired victory over them, and to harden themselves and their side against them, so, on the contrary, they who desire peace and accord, both interpret things in the best part they reasonably can, and seek how and where they may

find any lawful door of entry into accord and agreement with others: of which latter number I profess myself, by the grace of God, both a companion and a guide, especially in regard of my Christian countrymen * * * accounting it a cross that I am compelled, in any particular, to dissent from them, but a benefit and matter of rejoicing when I can in any thing, with good conscience, unite with them in matter, if not in manner, or, where it may be, in both."* "We uphold," says he, "whatsoever manifest good we know in the Church of England, whether doctrine, ordinance, or personal grace, to our utmost. We do acknowledge in it many excellent truths of doctrine which we also teach without commixture of error; many Christian ordinances which we also practice—being purged from the pollution of Anti-Christ—and for the godly persons in it, could we possibly separate them from the profane, we would gladly embrace them with both arms."† How noble this in a persecuted and exiled man! So far were they from seeking novelties, that he says: "But we, for our parts, as we do believe, by the word of God, that the things that we teach are not new, but old truths renewed, so are we no less fully persuaded that the church constitution in which we are set is cast in the apostolic and primitive mould, and not one day nor hour younger, in the nature and form of it, than the first Church of the New Testament."‡

Our fathers had no "mad rage" against what Hume calls "inoffensive observances, surplices, corner-caps

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* Works, vol. iii., pp. 354. † Works, vol. ii., pp. 14. ‡ Works, vol. iii,, pp. 43.

and tippets."* They contended for a great principle, precisely as Paul did. As a matter of expediency, Paul took Timothy and circumcised him. He cared nothing about circumcision one way or the other, but when it was attempted to impose circumcision as binding, and the great principle of religious liberty was at stake, he "gave subjection to them, no, not for an hour." He was then as precise as any Puritan ever was, and would have gone to prison and to death for a thing indifferent in itself, just as the Puritans did. When a great principle is in question, it matters little what brings the conflict on. It may be a sixpenny tax, or a pound of tea, or a tippet, or a surplice. No body cares any thing about the tea or the tippet; but we thank God that there have been men who would set a continent on fire, and spend millions of money, and lay down their lives, rather than pay that sixpenny tax when its payment would have conceded the right to exact it; and we thank God that there have been men who, rather than wear a tippet or surplice, when to have done so would have compromised the great principle of religious liberty, would go to prison and to death.

But those who urge that the Puritans were over-scrupulous, may not perceive that that is a two-edged sword; for if the points were thus indifferent, what shall we say of the intense bigotry and narrowness of those who, for want of conformity in things indifferent, could turn two thousand ministers from their pulpits, and imprison men, and put them to death? No, both parties under-

* See the Puritans and their Principles, by Dr. Hall, Int. Lect.

stood well what they were contending for, and if the Puritans had submitted to the imposition of tippets and surplices, this continent would have had another history.

And this leads me to say, that the seal of God in the success and moral glory that have crowned their enterprise has not been less unequivocal in the case of our fathers than in that of the early Christians. In each case there was but "a handful of corn in the earth, and God made the fruit thereof to shake as Lebanon." The sun does not look down upon better results of a pure Christianity in families, in churches, in schools and colleges, in missions, and in civil freedom, than can be traced directly and wholly to their sufferings and labors. If we consider their feeble beginnings, and the obstacles they had to encounter, the world has seen nothing like it.

Nor is it in this country alone that the fruits of their principles are seen. The civil liberty of England was from them alone. Not to mention the explicit passage so often quoted from Hume, Lord King says: "As for toleration, or any true notion of religious liberty, or any general freedom of conscience, we owe them not in the least degree to what is called the Church of England. On the contrary, we owe all these to the Independents in the time of the commonwealth, and to Locke, their most illustrious and enlightened disciple." "I fearlessly confess it," says Lord Brougham, as if it required even yet no little courage to speak the truth of the Puritans, "with whatever ridicule some may visit their excesses, or with whatever blame others, they, with the zeal of

martyrs, and the purity of early Christians, the skill and courage of the most renowned warriors, obtained for England the free constitution she enjoys."*

If, then, we except miracles, what seal which God set upon the labors and sufferings of the early Christians has he withheld from those of our fathers? We claim for them no perfection, but we see in them serious, earnest, prayerful, intelligent, self-denying Christians, witnesses for God, and on the whole, the best representatives and truest successors of the Apostles and early Christians then on the earth. We even venture to question whether John Penry, a minister regularly ordained, with so many points of resemblance to the Apostle Paul, and like him laying down his life for the cause of Christ, was not quite as much in the true line of apostolical succession as the Archbishop who signed his death-warrant.

Our fathers, then, in coming to this country, were pilgrims of the highest order; not simply wanderers, but wanderers as Abraham was, because they too "sought a city that hath foundations." As such we venerate them. We rejoice at the incorporation into their designation of a term which also designates the sublimest feature of human existence, and which should teach us and each of their descendants to say, "I am a pilgrim, and I am a stranger on the earth."

And the Pilgrims were also Fathers. Far beyond any other founders of states does this title belong to them. Their purpose was to lay foundations. They brought

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* The Puritans and their Principles, Int. Lect.

their families with them. They had tenderness, and forethought, and self-denying labor, and prayerful anxiety. No characteristic was wanting that could entitle them to that tender and venerable name.

They were Pilgrims, and they were Fathers; travellers towards a better country, that is, an heavenly; and the fathers and founders of a mighty empire on the earth.

As Pilgrim Fathers, their immediate gift to the world was New-England. From them and their institutions, in connection with their maritime position, and the climate and soil and scenery of the country, has originated the general type of character which belongs to her people. These institutions, this general type of character, we accept as ours, and rejoice in them. In the light of history, which shows the tendency of the sterner and the more hardy virtues to deteriorate where the soil is fertile and the climate genial, we are thankful that our fathers were directed to a land that necessitated industry and frugality, and stimulated enterprise and invention; fitted, much of it, as has been said, to produce nothing but ice and granite.

This land we love. We love her scenery, her green mountains, her transparent streams, her long summer days, her gorgeous autumns, her clear, sharp, frosty mornings, her winter evenings, her tasteful and thriving villages, her district school-houses, her frequent spires, and her quiet Sabbaths. We glory in her people; in their system of free schools, in their general intelligence and shrewd practical sense, in their inventions, their economy that saves to give, their true-hearted kindness,

their enlarged and far-seeing benevolence, their care for the insane and the deaf and dumb and blind, in their religious missions that circle the globe, in their love of a rational liberty, and in their general reverence for the law under its simplest forms.

Nor are we over sensitive to the provincialisms and uncouthnesses of here and there a "live" and unmitigated Yankee, though he may flatten the *ou*, and whittle, and ask questions, and boast absurdly. Others smack of the soil they grew in as strongly as he. If he do whittle, he will commonly whittle his way; his questions are apt to be to the point; and if he boasts that he is going to "cut all creation out," who more likely to do it?

If, then, the fathers had simply given the world New-England, it might have been well for her sons to associate themselves, as do others, to cherish local associations and family traits, and to keep alive that home-feeling, which is an ornament and a pleasure to the individual, while it narrows neither his vision nor his heart to the perception or love of all that is peculiar and good in other forms of society.

But if this had been all, this day had not been celebrated as it has been, with persistency and enthusiasm, from Plymouth rock to the shores of the Pacific. We do not honor the Pilgrims simply as the Fathers of New-England, but because they were the depositories and best representatives then on the earth of the one central principle on which the hopes of the race rest, the progress of which measures the world's progress, and gives unity to its history.

Here a wide field at once opens before us, but the time will permit us only to inquire—

1st. Whether there be such a principle of unity.

2d. What it is; and

3d. Whether its ascendency would secure to society all that is desirable.

Is there, then, indeed, the unity just spoken of in the history of this world? Is there any one central principle from their relation to which the early dispersion of families, the settlement of continents, the rise and fall of kingdoms, the waxing and waning of civilizations, and the transfer of the seats of empire have derived their chief significancy? Have they been parts of a great whole, subservient to some one end?

That they have we can not doubt, though we may be unable to see the connection with it of remote, and decayed, and lost races. The early limbs of the pine perish, and leave no trace on the smooth shaft when centuries have gone by, and it lifts itself a hundred feet into the air; but doubtless they contribute to make it what it is. Such a unity we can trace in all the fixed combinations, and circular and improgressive movements of the works of God. These have evident reference to an end beyond themselves, as the loom with its recurring movement to the pattern it finishes and passes on. The earth stands now, and the seasons revolve, and day and night succeed each other as they did six thousand years ago. The force of gravitation, the light of the sun, the capacity of the earth and air, of fire and water, to minister to vegetable and animal life, are the same now as then. These fixed combinations and re

curring movements are subservient to vegetable and animal life. Moreover, in every individual plant, and in every animal, are parts that minister to the well-being of the whole, and then that whole thus ministered unto, offers itself to minister to somewhat higher, till we reach man, who takes up into himself every faculty and law in all below him, thus crowning the whole, and showing that it is in subserviency to his well-being that it all finds its unity. How beautiful and grand this permanent order and subserviency, this circling of day and night, and of the seasons, and this ministration from age to age of the heavens and the earth, to the successive generations of men!

And is there a unity so vast and perfect in this fixed and improgressive order of things, that is but secondary, and shall there be none in the flow of time, in the succession of the generations, in the onward sweep and termination of the great current of providential movements? Shall there be no thought or purpose, or informing idea of God, giving its unity to this vast onward movement, and which is ultimately to protrude itself as the blossom from the stem, and then be recognized as the end toward which every secret process and the slow changes of the ages had been tending? We believe there is such a central idea—it is the teaching both of Scripture and of reason—and if so, then in *that*, and in that alone, will be found the key to all history; and from their relation to that, the significancy and grandeur of events, however splendid or humble in their outward aspect, will be estimated.

We next inquire then, what that principle is? It

can not be the religious freedom so often spoken of in connection with the Pilgrims; for that may be where there is no religion, but in its stead indifference and infidelity. Such a freedom could avail little. That which is to bless the world is not mere freedom of any kind, but true religion putting itself forth in freedom, and vindicating, in the name of God, all the rights and means necessary to its full expansion. The central purpose and principle in the onward movement of this world we suppose then to be, *the vital union of man with God in moral conformity to him, and so in preparation for an eternal life.* So only do we find an extension of the unity and subserviency we see in all things, by linking earth and time to heaven and an eternal progression. This is the principle—for this the world stands; but for this, religious freedom will be needed, and the demand for that will bring men into such relations to human governments that that will be the thing immediately contended for—the point around which the conflict will be waged. It has been no love for freedom in the abstract, but of freedom for the sake of religion that has walked in the fiery furnace, and gone into the lion's den, and said to rulers, "We ought to obey God rather than men," and so has drawn on and sustained a resistance to oppression that has been the basis of all the civil freedom now in the world, All other freedoms have died out, and will die. This alone has the sap of an immortal life.

The object of religion must be the free expansion and perfecting of that in man by which he is capable of religion. If, then, the religious nature be central in man,

it must be that for which all things are preparing a final expansion and appropriate sphere.

That this is so appears because the religious nature is that which is central in the unity of the individual man. Each man has in himself a unity no less than nature and the whole onward scheme of things, and the one is analagous to the other. In the powers that upbuild and sustain the body, as those of nutrition and circulation, man has a circular and improgressive system, that goes on from the beginning to the end of the life of the individual—as the movements causing day and night, and the seasons go on in nature till the end of the life of the race; and this improgressive system in each man is to the unfolding and progressive life of his mind what the movements of nature are to the unfolding and progressive life of the race. This system is for the sake of the intellect with its perceptions and deductions; and this again for the emotions, as of beauty and sublimity when we regard *things*, and of complacency and love when we regard *persons*. But of the emotions, the highest are those which are involved in the love of man, and in worship—in the love and worship of the Infinite One; and thus that love of God and of man, in which the Bible declares true religion to consist, is precisely that the capacity for which philosophy will show lies deepest in our nature, and gives it its unity. It is the central blossom, as in the palm tree, without the expansion of which no individual reaches his full development. But what is thus true of the individual, must be true of the race.

It may be observed, too, that as the natural order of

the growth of the individual is, first the physical powers, then the intellect, and then the religious nature; so in the history of the world there has been, first, the ascendency of physical prowess, then of intellect; and that now, when the whole world is known, and commerce and science are bringing all parts of it together, religion is casting the eye of faith over it all and preparing for its conquest.

That the religious element is central, appears also from the necessity of a true religion to any permanent progress or elevation of the race. How can man be elevated except as there is that above him of which he may lay hold, and with which he may commune? We must be gradually transformed into the likeness of that with which we commune voluntarily and with pleasure, and whoever reaches a point where he supposes there *is* nothing, or communes *with* nothing higher and better than himself, has reached a point where all elevation must cease. Hence a man can do nothing so fatal to the best hopes of the race as to lower the character of God, or to weaken the impression it is adapted to make on the minds of men. No heathen nation can make permanent progress.

The same thing appears from the absurdities which men have received, and the impositions to which they have submitted in connection with religion. You may connect a heavy burden with the child on the back of the Indian mother, and she will bear it if you can make her believe, either that it is only the weight of the child, or that they are so inseparably connected that if she would get loose from the one she must abandon the

other. How else but by connecting them with that which is deepest and dearest, could men have been made to submit to the absurdities and impositions of Brahminism and of Popery?

Again, as has been said, it is only through this that this world can become a part in the unity of one great moral system, the existence of which is indicated by analogy, and confirmed by Scripture, and to which the vast physical universe revealed by the telescope must be wholly subordinate.

Once more, if we search history for the cause of the most earnest and pervading movements in the past, we shall come to the same conclusion. From religion indeed has proceeded the only movement that has been continuous from the beginning. What but the religious element could have kept the Jews a distinct people for 4000 years? What else could have caused the Christian movement? Think as we may of the religion, the amount of thought and labor, and of expenditure, both of money and of life, that have sprung from it, the revolutions it has wrought, not only in religion, but in philosophies, in art, in government, in social life and the forms of civilization, and that too in spite of the fiercest opposition, show the power of an element like one of the great forces of nature, that "spreads undivided, operates unspent." What but this could have produced the Mohammedan movement, so volcanic, resistless and persistent? To this day it is not spent, but still stands so sturdily and glares so fiercely on all who would attack it, that Christian missionaries turn aside to more hopeful fields. In the present war be-

tween Turkey and Russia, we all know what will infuse into the conflict its fiercest, most destructive and unmanageable elements. Through what slumbering element but this could all Europe have been precipitated in the crusades, like a fiery flood upon Asia? What else could have produced the intense movement of the Reformation, and drawn the sharp lines of division that have sprung from it? These are the great movements of the race—the continents in the sea of history, embosoming the lesser movements which spring from divisions into races, and the love of conquest, and personal and family ambition.

Nor has the influence of the religious principle been less where it has not been ostensibly the dominant element. By all lawgivers and despots, whose immediate object has been power, religion has been so incorporated into the state as to be subservient to the purposes of ambition, and has really been the cement of all enduring despotisms. It has been *the* art of king-craft and of priestcraft to identify the interests of the clergy with those of the ruling powers, and so to train the religious sentiment as to make the support of despotism obedience to God. Hence, James of England, though he had in Scotland professed himself a Presbyterian, said he hated the Independents worse than he did the Catholics. Hence the affinity of every reäctionary and monarchical government in France for the Jesuits, and the fact that Protestantism has been uniformly persecuted there. It is felt that the religious liberty which it implies and cherishes, especially in searching the Scriptures, the thought which it requires, the direct responsibility to

God which it teaches, and the power of a free conscience which it educates, are antagonistic to the spirit of despotism. And so they are. Religious freedom would fit men for civil freedom, and eventuate in that.

And here I may remark, that it is this want of congruity between Protestantism in its true spirit and the forms of government in Europe that, more than all other causes, has prevented its more rapid and wider spread there, and that has enabled the Pope to recover regions once lost. The rulers have not heartily seconded its efforts; they have feared it, and do now. They watched its first risings; they counter-work and stamp it out as they would fire. It is the presence of this in Turkey that Nicholas fears, and its suppression has more to do with the politics of Europe than appears on the surface.

It would appear, then, that even where place and power have been primarily sought, the controlling element has still been the religious one. This philosophers and statesmen have sometimes scorned as a weakness and superstition, but they have never been able to disregard it with impunity, and often they have been astonished and baffled by its flaming up where they least expected it.

Now it was the growth of this in freedom, that was the great idea or principle that was in our fathers, and wrought in them, and has come down through them to us. We are not of those who disclaim antiquity and discard transmission and succession, and fail to connect ourselves with a vital and organized past. If we be-

lieve less than some in the regular succession of the Popes, and in the transmission for eighteen hundred years, often through murderous hands, of spiritual virtues and powers, we do believe in the perpetual presence of the Spirit of God as of the Shekinah, in his Church, and in a succession for six thousand years, in one unbroken line from the first martyr, through Moses and Daniel and the Apostles, of those who have inherited the promises and died in faith; and in the transmission through them, so that they have always lived and glowed somewhere, of the great ideas of God's supremacy, and of man's right to worship him according to the dictates of his conscience. In this line our fathers stood, these ideas flaming up in them like a beacon-light; they stood, worthy successors of those of old in the same line, who "wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." In this line we would stand.

The religious element being thus the central one in the history of this world, our next inquiry is, whether its free and legitimate expansion would secure all that belongs to the well-being of society. Is it through this that the Divine idea must find its realization and counterpart?

That this is so we believe, in the first place, because we believe in the word of God, and that says it is so.

Again, we believe it because God has so constituted this world, and, doubtless, the universe, that he who aims at and secures the highest good in any department or sphere, will also incidentally, and so best, secure the

greatest amount of subordinate good. This is the general law, and whatever exceptions to it there may seem to be are accidental and temporary. In this principle lies the secret of the unconscious power wielded by our fathers.

Upon the general illustration of a proposition so broad as this we can not now enter. It must suffice to notice its application in organic systems where there is mutual relation and interaction of parts. In these that which is highest is indeed formed by the lower, but when formed it reäcts upon that lower and becomes necessary to its perfection. Thus the brain, the highest and most central part of the body, is that to which all the other parts are subordinate; but this reäcts, and ministers a pervading and vital influence to every inferior part, essential both to their functions and growth, and the perfection of the brain will both imply and secure that of every inferior part.

So in the tree. For the purposes of its own growth and well-being it forms the leaves highest and last; but it is only as these expand freely in the air and sunlight that the roots will strike themselves deepest, and the trunk be enlarged, and the vitality prolonged. The tree grows from its top. And here is the model of political and social growth. Society is built up like an individual. Like a tree, it grows from its top. Let the nutritive and circulatory movements of society flow freely on and up to the quickening and expansion of an intellectual life, and that will so reäct—as we see it doing in our day, by the application of science to art—as to give to the material interests themselves a range and power

entirely unknown before. And then let the top still expand into the higher air and purer light of beauty, and of moral and religious truth, and in every fibre at the root will be felt the upward movement; and there will descend nutritive power and regulative principles, causing a growth that will defy the touch of time, that time will only strengthen and enlarge. The elaborated wisdom of sages will descend and diffuse itself into all the currents of thought, and reach the springs and motives of action, and will eliminate evils by those gradual organic revolutions which come on like the tide, but which no human power can set back.

The difficulty with past civilizations has been that they did not form an adequate top. The products of the physical and intellectual life circulated in and for themselves, and hence plethora, stagnation, debility, spasms, and dissolution. This is the stereotyped round in which families and nations perish through prosperity. But if these products might flow on and up, if the affections might distribute them rather than appetite, benevolence rather than ostentation, and principle rather than fashion and caprice; if they might minister to a pure and spiritual religion, and be controlled and distributed by that, it is not for the imagination to depict the beauty and blessedness that would pervade society.

Particularly do we believe that there would spring from this a higher culture of all that pertains to beauty; and only from this a permanent civil liberty.

There has been an impression that the virtues of our fathers were stern and repulsive of beauty. And so is the mountain-top stern, where the storms wrestle, and

the snow abides, and the ice congeals; but from that mountain-top comes the beauty that looks up at its base, and that skirts the stream on its long way to the ocean. So will the sterner virtues always melt into beauty when the storms and cold with which they have to contend have passed away. Beauty is of God, and it can not be that he who has woven the web of light in its colors, and so wrought its golden threads into the tissue of nature, who paints the flower, and unfurls the banner of sunset, should not delight in all beauty, and that it should not proceed from all godlikeness. We believe, indeed, that only as there are with God himself, the high and stern mountains of a holiness and justice unapproachable, does there proceed from him the smile that makes the violet glad. Neither Christ nor his apostles concerned themselves with art; they did not even speak of it. The struggle with moral evil was too earnest. Let this be overcome, and the alliance between the arts and the baser passions dissolved, and there would spring up in connection with the industry and science and wealth that religion would produce, a diffused beauty in nature and in art of which we have now no conception.

That there can be permanent civil liberty only through the religious nature is evident, because it is only through this that the true idea of a state, and of its relation to the individual will ever be seen. Through the awakening in each man, and the growth of those powers by which he is connected with God and with immortality, and is bound above all things to conform his spiritual nature to its law, the individual becomes

an end in himself, and thus finds a ground for demanding that nothing shall exist, whether in Church or in state, that may stand between him and the freest, and highest expansion of these powers; nothing which shall make use of him for its own sake, and so degrade him from a person into a thing. This is the principle contended for by our fathers. On this ground man has a right to claim that outward institutions, civil and religious, shall be for the individual; shall be means and conditions of growth to his higher powers, as the air, and light, and food are of the growth of the body; and if they are not so, or are obstructive of that end, then, on the same ground, he has a right to remove and destroy them. The Church and the state can become a part of the beautiful unity in the Divine plan, and have a right to be, only as they fit the individual who comes under their agency for a higher sphere; and they are perfect, and from God, just in proportion as they furnish the best possible conditions of individual growth in all that belongs to a true manhood. In the light of these powers man is seen to have worth and dignity, rights to have sacredness, and the life of the lowliest is invested with a solemn grandeur. Here, indeed, is the basis of rights, and so of that freedom which springs from rights and respects rights, which has God for its author, the good of all through that of each for its end, and for which, in the light of reason and conscience, a man may lay down his life.

Now what we ask, and all that we ask is, institutions, both civil and religious, pervaded by this freedom, flexible to the demands of individual growth; and the right

of the people to judge what modifications that may require. Especially do we demand, in the name of humanity and of God, religious freedom. Upon that all other freedom rests. On this subject especially do we demand the right of free action and of free speech, not only in the church but in the street, and the day is not yet when that can be taken from us.

We believe that government and rulers are for the people, the church and the clergy for the laity, and that God has given to men the right, as in their civil, so in their religious capacity, honestly using all the light he has given them, whether of reason or of revelation, so to organize themselves, both in Church and state, as will best secure civil rights and spiritual growth; and organizations so originated and so resulting we believe to be of God. They are not rebellion, they are not schism; they are component parts of God's one great and free kingdom which he will love, and own, and bless, and they ought to be recognized as such. His sun has not shone less brightly, nor his rain and dew descended less bountifully upon these United States since they organized themselves thus, than when governed by one who was "king by the grace of God;" nor have the sunshine of his love, and the rain and dews of his grace been less abundant upon our churches than upon those governed and blessed by popes and prelates.

Opposed to the free and flexible systems which this principle would form are those—and they include all others—which have an end in themselves, to which the individual is squared, and hewed, and bent, and made

subservient. Under these there will be, not true freedom, but a mixture of license and restraint. Those who manage them are willing that the productive faculties of man should be sharpened to any extent; they favor caste, or something equivalent, for that purpose. They give full scope to the sensitive and sensuous nature; they patronize and subsidize the fine arts; they provide processions, and games, and books of sports for the people, and *they have standing armies to keep them in order*. If the sugar-plum will not do, they have the whip. But, recognizing instinctively the main doctrine of this discourse, they uniformly either dwarf or pervert the religious nature. They intervene in every possible way between man and his Maker, assuming ghostly powers, and constructing conduits and channels by which the grace of God may be conveyed to the profane people who may not have immediate access to Him. This is their great resource. This done, they may mock at revolution and bide their time, knowing that when the Louis Philippe, or the Louis Napoleon, or Santa Anna, that is sure to come shall appear, the bewildered and helpless people will relapse into monarchy. They think little of the crimes and vices which spring from the depraved appetites and passions; and if the clergy will pray according to the rubric and conform to the canons, they may be indolent, inefficient, dishonest, licentious, profane, without rebuke. But if a clergyman cannot wear a stole, or a surplice, or a white gown, or a black one; if a few Christians meet, in a private house even, for the study of the Scriptures and for prayer; if the Madiai read the Bible; if Miss Cunningham distribute a Bible and

Pilgrim's Progress, then come confiscations, imprisonments, banishment, death. It is for those who do these things that the dungeon, and the slow fire, and the rack are prepared. It is these whom malice pursues after death, and casts out and buries with the burial of a dog. Those who use missals and say prayers, they like; those who read the Bible and pray, they persecute.

There is no book that they so fear as they do the Bible; none that they are so afraid to have the *children* read. They keep it out of their schools, and of their seats of power, as they would the plague. They burn it. They can evade any thing, and stand before any thing but the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Such systems, whether called Christian or heathen, are essentially the same. They wish to use man as a thing, and so intervene between him and God. Under them civilization may advance far, and aggregate power accumulate, and endure long, but *man will deteriorate*, and destruction from without or within is certain. Still, when one system is destroyed, another will arise. Forms may be changed, but the spirit will be the same; revolution may succeed revolution, till they shall have as little significance as street brawls, and there be as many days of July as there are days *in* July, but there will be balanced, and permanent freedom only as there is religion in liberty.

As might be anticipated from what has been said, the special support of all such systems, aside from physical force, has been in an appeal to the religious nature. An exclusive divine right has been claimed.

That of prelates the Pilgrims rejected; that of kings they conceded. Now, that of kings is exploded, at least here. We put it on the same footing as the Divine right of constables. That of prelates, being more closely connected with that religious nature from which is all our hope, but into which every superstition strikes its roots, is still conceded by many, and is at this moment the one antagonistic element among us to the spirit and principles of our fathers. The Pope and certain bishops claim a divine right, received by transmission in an unbroken line from the Apostles, to govern the Church; and in connection with this they claim the power either to change bread into flesh and wine into blood, or to communicate some virtue to the sacraments which they would not have if administered by persons appointed for that purpose in some other way. Is this claim valid? If so, then Popery and Puseyism are right, and all Protestants, Church of England and all, are schismatics and heretics. If so, there are blessings in Christianity which we cannot have by going directly to God. These men hold them in their hands, and the whole race is at their mercy. If so, Christ is not the only priest under the new dispensation, and the benefit of the sacraments will not be wholly from him through faith, but partly, at least, from a mysterious virtue in the elements which these persons only can give. This claim we reject utterly. We say that Christ has made all his people "Kings and priests unto God," and nothing shall take from us the right to go directly to God through the one great High Priest. All systems based on this claim are and must be exclusive and intolerant,

and have always been connected with an ignorant and oppressed people.

Our principles, on the other hand, forbid exclusiveness, and whatever of this we may have, is due, not to them, but to personal infirmity. They call upon us to exercise a large charity. Give us those essential conditions through which the spiritual nature may be best developed; give us the right of private judgment; give us the Bible;—and here I wish the time would permit me to repeat to you fully the recent words of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England, pressed from him in his conflict with Popery, in which he stands, not for "the Bible interpreted by the prayer-book,"—that would not do for him,—but for the Bible alone, and says, "Whatever is not absolutely declared therein, and yet claims to be implicitly received, I look upon with suspicion," thus sanctioning the very principle contended for by Robinson, and all that he contended for;—Give us, I say, the Bible, and that alone as our standard; and the doctrine of justification by faith so far as to exclude all priestly intervention between us and God, and we can feel that we stand shoulder to shoulder with the multitude of our brethren of every name—with the Hollanders who had the same spirit with the Puritans—with the Huguenots, those nobles in God's kingdom than whom none were ever nobler—with the Presbyterians, whose fathers struggled in Scotland, as ours did in England—with the the great company of Methodists and Baptists, and also with our Episcopal brethren, so far as they will permit us. "We would gladly embrace them

with both arms." We do not object to Episcopacy as a form of government preferred by the people, but to its being imposed upon us as exclusively of divine right, and to that spirit of the clergy generally, and of the laity increasingly, which says, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." "I belong to a church, and you do not." "I have a right to preach and to administer the sacraments, and you have not." "There are blessings in Christianity which you can have only by coming to us,"—"an all-grasping" spirit "which gives no quarter, allows no truce, but demands an unconditional submission." If history did not instruct us in the uniform tendency of this exclusive principle, we might be surprised to hear the excellent and venerable bishops in their late address, while they claim a middle place between the Romanists and us, complain of the treatment they receive from them, and then turn at once and treat us in the same manner, not allowing that we are Churches at all, or bodies of Christians even, but only "forms of error." "On the one hand," say they, "we behold an all-grasping Romanism which gives no quarter, allows no truce, but demands an unconditional submission. On the other hand are *various forms of error* still pervaded, more or less by the true spirit of Christianity, but constantly breaking into fragments, and steadily tending to latitudinarianism and infidelity."* In exclusiveness and unconscious misrepresentation can any thing go beyond this? Here it is—no quarter, no truce, but unconditional submission—and that, too, to

* Triennial Convention, New-York.

those who hold precisely the same relation to the Romanists that we hold to them—unconditional submission, or we must be given over to "uncovenanted mercies," and infidelity and perdition. Now all this we greatly regret. Most gladly would we stand shoulder to shoulder with them and try to do the work of our common Master. We will try to do it still; we too have a ministry and ordinances that we think are of divine institution; we have an open Bible and a merciful God and Saviour. If He shall show us that we are wrong, that he does not intend to work in accordance with the general principle and scheme of freedom of which I have spoken, that the labors and sufferings and great promise of the past were all vain and delusive, we will abandon our cherished associations for the dear sake of Him whom our fathers at least sought to follow. We will then give in our unconditional submission.

But to us the prospect is not altogether dark. We are encouraged by the remembrance of the blessing of God in the past, and we hope he will continue to bless us. We do not believe, as they seem to think, that his past signal blessings have been an unaccountable mistake which he will rectify in future; but rather, if we shall not prove recreant, that they are but earnests of greater blessings to come. If we see among us tendencies to be struggled against, requiring wisdom and prayer, surely we are not alone in this. We had supposed that we were gaining strength, and not only we, but the great body of kindred churches. We suppose so still, and that the prospect for the diffusion and ultimate triumph, substantially, of the great principles of

religious and civil freedom held by the Puritans, was never more encouraging. Those principles that were cabined in the May Flower—the same once inclosed by the walls of an upper chamber in Jerusalem—and that, two hundred and thirty-three years ago, this day, were first breathed into the atmosphere of this continent from Plymouth Rock, have seemed to abide in it there as a mighty spell, and have so diffused and mingled themselves with it every where, that the whole people breathe them in as with the very breath of their life; and so that no chemistry of tyranny, civil or ecclesiastical, can ever get them out. They were never as strong as they are to-day. They make little show of unity by great convocations. They affect no pomp, and provide no prizes for a worldly ambition. They are in the world under the same aspect and conditions as Christ himself was—as spiritual Christianity, and truth, and civil liberty have always been. Wealth does not gravitate toward them; fashion has no affinity for them. The votaries of these more often detach themselves and float to other centres. In their simplicity they stand, like the heavens, unpropped by visible pillars. They seem, if not born, yet as it were born again for this continent and this age, and for that oceanic breadth and depth of movement which is clearly before society and the Church. They ally themselves with all that is peculiar in our free institutions, with all that is most simple and grand in the works of God, with all that is free and mighty in the movements of the elements, with all that is comprehensive in charity, and great in effort and self-sacrifice. Like the electric fluid, they are

subtle and pervasive, often working silently, and seen only in their effects as they quicken the growth of the plants of righteousness, and crystallize the gems that are to be set in the diadem of the Redeemer. But when the storm shall come, if come it must, that final storm that is to shake "not the earth only, but also heaven," "that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, then they will be abroad in their might; now imperceptibly controlling affinities, and now flashing out in their brightness, and speaking in thunder-tones in the moral and political heavens. To the ears of the oppressed in every land those tones will be as music. To the grave where freedom may still be buried, they will be as the trump of God. She will hear them and come forth clothed in the garments of her immortality, and the nations shall walk and dwell with her.

These principles we receive. We wish no antagonism with any body, or any thing, except that which would be necessitated by faithfulness to them. We wish to know where, and through what it is that God is working, and to work with him. This we would do in peace, and without being persecuted, or reviled, or cast out, if we may: but at all hazards we would work with Him. This it is, and not mere freedom, civil or religious, that is to save us; and we receive these principles because we believe that God is working through them, and that by them, as by the sling and stone, deliverance is to come. We receive them because we believe that the might of Omnipotence is in them; and that the promise of the Immutable One is theirs.

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